

CLAIMS

1. A method of communicating an e-mail a text message over a network from a user terminal to an intended recipient terminal at a remote location, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) the user terminal specifying a confidential message store address of a server (WS1) that is capable of being accessed by the recipient computer via the network;
- (b) the user terminal transmitting said e-mail text message to said store address to reside therein;
- 10 (c) the user terminal transmitting a notification over the network to the recipient, said notification incorporating said selected store address and an instruction to the intended recipient to communicate with said store address; and
- (d) said recipient terminal accessing said store address to retrieve said text message.
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2. The method of claim 1 in which step (a) comprises selecting the message store address from a range of possible addresses.
3. The method of claim 1 in which step (c) is performed before step (b).
4. The method of claim 1 in which the user terminal is a personal
- 20 computer.
5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3 in which the user terminal is a mobile telephone.

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~~5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3 in which the user terminal is a mobile telephone.~~

6. The method of claim 4 in which the data store address is an address of a server incorporated into the personal computer.

5 7. The method of claim 1 in which the message store is a server that is remote from the user terminal.

8. The method of claim 1 comprising the additional step of (e) monitoring the accessing by the recipient terminal of said text message from said message store.

10 9. The method of claim 8 comprising the additional step of deleting the text message from the message store following accessing of the text message by the recipient terminal.

10. The method of claim 8 comprising the additional step of deleting the text message from the message store following accessing of the message
15 by a predetermined number of recipient terminals.

11. The method of claim 1 comprising an authentication step which must be successfully completed prior to the recipient terminal being permitted to access the store address, said authentication step comprising an authentication communication between the recipient terminal and the
20 server, the server determining from the identity proffered by the user terminal whether or not to allow access to the message.

12. The method of claim 1 in which the network is the internet.

13. A method of communicating an e-mail text message over a network from a user personal computer to an intended recipient terminal at a remote location, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) the personal computer specifying a confidential message store address of a server (WS1) that is capable of being accessed by the recipient computer via the network;
- (b) the personal computer transmitting said e-mail text message to said store address to reside therein;
- 10 (c) the personal computer transmitting a notification over the network to the recipient, said notification incorporating said selected store address and an instruction to the intended recipient to communicate with said store address; and
- (d) said recipient terminal accessing said store address to retrieve said text message.
- 15 14. A method of communicating an e-mail text message over a network from a personal computer, said personal computer comprising a personal web server, to an intended recipient terminal at a remote location, the method comprising the steps of:
- 20 (a) the personal computer specifying a confidential message store address of said personal web server that is capable of being accessed by the recipient computer via the network;
- (b) the personal computer transmitting said e-mail text message to said store address to reside therein;

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(c) the personal computer transmitting a notification over the network to the recipient, said notification incorporating said selected store address and an instruction to the intended recipient to communicate with said store address; and

- 5 (d) said recipient terminal accessing said store address to retrieve said text message.

10 15. A computer program product comprising computer readable program code executable by a user terminal to cause the following steps to be executed by said user terminal in response to a user command to said user terminal to transmit an e-mail text message from said user terminal to a recipient terminal, said steps comprising:

(a) the user terminal specifying a confidential message store address of a server (WS1) that is capable of being accessed by the recipient computer via the network;

- 15 (b) the user terminal transmitting said e-mail text message to said store address to reside therein; and

(c) the user terminal transmitting a notification over the network to the recipient, said notification incorporating said selected store address and an instruction to the intended recipient to communicate with said store address.

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16. A computer terminal capable of transmitting data over a network to a remote recipient computer, wherein said computer terminal is configured such that on inputting of an instruction to cause an e-mail text message to be transmitted to a recipient computer, the transmitting terminal instead selects a confidential message store address on a server

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that is capable of being accessed via the network by the recipient computer, the transmitting terminal transmits the text message to that store address, and sends a notification via the network to the recipient computer, the notification providing information that the text message is
5 available to the recipient computer by accessing the particular store address.

10 17. A computer terminal as claimed in claim 16 comprising a delay timer for delaying the transfer of the text message from the computer terminal to the message store address until a predetermined time has elapsed after the terminal attempted to issue the notification to the recipient computer.

18. A computer terminal as claimed in claim 16 in the form of a personal computer, the server being incorporated into the personal computer.

15 19. A computer terminal as claimed in claim 18 in which the server is arranged to monitor accessing of the selected message address and to provide a report on such accessing, the report being made available to the user of the terminal.

20 20. A computer terminal as claimed claim 16 comprising authentication checking means for receiving and checking a proof of identity proffered by a recipient computer prior to allowing the recipient computer to access the text message at the store address.

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